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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Iowa Corn Checkoff Collaborates With Biotech Firm Athenix
to Develop Nitrogen-Efficient Hybrids**

JOHNSTON, Iowa – May 19, 2008 – The Iowa Corn Promotion Board (ICPB) is collaborating with Athenix Corp., a leader in agricultural and industrial biotechnology, to develop hybrids that are more efficient in using nitrogen fertilizer. These new hybrids could result in improved economics on the farm, reduced impact on the environment and reduced energy requirements to grow the corn crop.

“Nitrogen fertilizer has become the single most expensive variable cost for growing corn, after seed,” says Tim Burrack, a corn grower from Arlington who serves on ICPB. “In Iowa, nitrogen prices have increased 73 percent since 2000. Our organization wants to provide farmers with the ability to grow corn and more efficiently use nitrogen.”

“Using biotechnology, researchers are inserting genes into corn plants that improve the nitrogen utilization of corn,” says Nick Duck, vice president of research at Athenix.

“This will not eliminate the need for nitrogen fertilizer but our goal is a minimum of 20 percent improvement in nitrogen efficiency in corn,” Duck says.

The results come in two ways, according to Duck: “First, we could get increased yield for the same amount of nitrogen fertilizer. Or second, we could get the same amount of yield with less nitrogen fertilizer.”

ICPB has used checkoff dollars to fund this collaboration.

“This research is an important first step toward finding solutions for Iowa farmers,” Burrack says. “Our goal is get a product developed, then approved and licensed to the seed industry so that Iowa farmers can benefit from it.”

Working in partnership with universities, research laboratories, and private companies, the ICPB is dedicated to developing new technology that will benefit corn farmers. The ICPB, made up of 17 Iowa growers elected by their peers, collects nearly \$8 million in checkoff funds annually to develop and defend markets, fund research, and provide education about corn and corn products. For more information visit, www.iowacorn.org

Athenix is a leading biotechnology company that develops novel products and technologies for agricultural and industrial applications, including biofuels and bioconversions. Athenix has established an outstanding intellectual property portfolio and market access ability around enhanced plants, microbes, genes, enzymes, and processes with emphasis on two major markets: 1) novel agricultural traits for growers such as insect resistance, nematode resistance, herbicide tolerance, and their use for the crop production industry; and 2) the discovery of genes and proteins for use in the sustainable chemical industry with a focus on biofuels like ethanol and other natural products. For more information, visit www.athenixcorp.com